

VANDALISM

Duxbury girls face civil rights complaint

State says bias spurred attack

By CHRISTINE WALSH
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The Attorney General's Office has filed a civil rights complaint against three Duxbury teenagers accused of vandalizing the home of a Jewish family.

The complaint, filed yesterday in Plymouth Superior Court, alleges the teenage girls were motivated partly by their bias against the family's religious beliefs. The

complaint was made to prevent the girls from inflicting further harm on the victims, said Assistant Attorney General Suzanne Glick Gilfix, who is prosecuting the case.

The girls are accused of shooting paintballs and throwing rocks at the home Dec. 17 and leaving a note at the scene that said: "That's for not decorating for Christmas."

The girls, 15-year-old Duxbury High School sophomores, have not been identified because of their age.

Gilfix said the victims shared in the decision to file the civil rights complaint.

"They had never suffered anti-Semitism before in all their years living in Duxbury," she said. "They were very upset. They're

very concerned that this would happen to other people. They want to make sure that it doesn't happen again."

Police charged two of the girls with malicious damage to property worth more than \$250, possession of an air gun by a minor and two separate hate crime charges for intimidation and property damage. They pleaded innocent.

The third girl was arrested later. It could not be determined this morning whether she was charged with the same crimes.

The Plymouth County district attorney's office is handling the criminal charges.

Gilfix said she believes the teenagers were aware that the family is Jewish. The home

belongs to a Duxbury Middle School teacher who taught at least one of the girls.

Still, Gilfix said, it doesn't matter what religion the family practices.

"The fact is they definitely did this, in their own words, for not decorating for Christmas," she said. "It shows that they don't really care what the victims were. It's just that they don't celebrate the Christmas holiday the way that the girls perceived they should."

Gilfix will seek a preliminary injunction against the girls under the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act. It would prohibit them from further harming the victims, or anyone else, based on religion.

If the girls violate the injunction, they could spend up to 2½ years in state prison. That would increase to 10 years if they physically injure anyone.

Gilfix said the family is still very upset by the incident.

"They were terrified when they walked in the door that evening," she said.

Gilfix said the Duxbury girls are not being used to set an example.

"This is done because the defendants' acts violated the law," she said.

A hearing on the request for a preliminary injunction is scheduled for Feb. 14 in Plymouth Superior Court.